



Volume 5

Winter 2012

SERV Study Newsletter

Survey of Experiences of Returning Veterans



Department of Veterans Affairs



SERV Study updates

Currently, we are working on the first phase of the larger SERV Study. So far, 55 Veterans have helped us to test the final baseline survey. Out of necessity, it is a long interview, but we're finding that you are able to complete it with no problem. (Our interviewers actually tire first!) We have begun the 3 month follow up interviews, and they are going well.

Thanks to all Veterans who have participated in the pilot studies so far— your input is extremely helpful to us. We have spoken to male and female Veterans of all ages and from all branches of military service. Our last step before rolling out the official study is final permission from the Institutional Review Board at the Canandaigua, NY VA, which is the home of our telephone call center.

We have a raffle winner!

Congratulations to Chad from Minnesota! His name was chosen from a random drawing on Dec 1st. He won a \$100 Visa gift card to spend as he chooses. Our next drawing will take place on March 1st, 2012. Good luck to all our Veteran participants! The winner will be notified by email and phone.

SERV Study is on YouTube!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKD7rqmBwnE>

The word is getting out— check us out on YouTube. Use the link above or just search “SERV Study” and you should see 4 or 5 short videos of SERV Study advertisements. Very soon our public service announcements will be shown on VA hospital video feeds, Oprah Winfrey Network, and possibly MSNBC. We hope that this will generate a lot of interest in our project, and we are ready!

Please feel free to tell any of your friends or colleagues who may be eligible. As you know, Veterans are eligible if they have been separated from active duty, and had been deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan or surrounding waters.

- New research project to survey Veterans that have just recently left Armed Services in Iraq and Afghanistan
- A collaboration between the Department of Veterans Affairs and Yale University
- We will be talking to Veterans from across the country
- Your comments welcome!

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Why do we ask all those questions?

We know that the SERV Study is a long interview— and we ask about lots of things: mood, feelings, trauma, coping, spirituality, substance use, impulsiveness, health care, sleeping and eating habits, health conditions, daily activities, just to name a few. All questions are taken from well-used published surveys and will help us to determine such things as when trauma may have occurred (before, during or after deployment), what type of symptoms a Veteran may experience (is it general anxiety, panic disorder or PTSD?) among other things. Some of the questions may seem repetitive, but this is common in research, and we need to be consistent.

We are grateful for the time our Veteran participants give us to advance this important project.

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Survey of Experiences of Returning Veterans

Miscellaneous

- * We welcome your comments/questions/input. If any Veteran participant is interested in sharing his or her thoughts, we would like to add a participants' section to the next issue. Any comments or questions are welcome, such as: are your study checks late? How was your interview experience? What do we do with the data? Just email Beth Dombrowski at Elizabeth.dombrowski@va.gov or the general study mailbox— SERVStudy1@gmail.com.

Please visit the websites in the box at right. Also— if you are having

- * a particularly bad time with any emotional symptoms and need to talk to someone urgently, call the **Veterans Crisis Line** at **1-800-273-8255** and press 1. It is staffed 24/7 and provides confidential help to Veterans and their families.

Useful links:

National PTSD website:

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

PTSD Program Locator:

http://vaww1.va.gov/directory/guide/PTSD_flash.asp?isFlash=1

IAVA (Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America)

<http://iava.org>

For a VA facility near you:

<http://vaww1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1>

We're on the web!

<http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn1/serv/>